REMARKS

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for taking the time to discuss the instant invention on April 2, 2004. Claims 1-44 remain in this application.

During the interview the examiner stated that he believed that terms such as "at the same time" and "concurrently" could be interpreted to include progressive or sequential cutting. Applicants respectfully do not agree with this interpretation. Nonetheless, in order to expedite the allowance of this application, Applicants have amended the claims. Claims 1, 14, 26, 36, and 39 have been amended.

Each of the pending claims, as amended, sets forth a blind trimming apparatus that cuts the head rail, bottom rail and blind slats of a Venetian blind concurrently and in a non-sequential manner. As such, the respective cutter for each of the three components is cutting its component while the other components are also being cut by their respective cutters. For example, at some point during the cutting of the head rail by the rotational die plate, the blades on the linear cutter are also cutting the bottom rail and the blind slats.

Such an arrangement is not disclosed by the cited prior art Marocco '857 patent. Instead, the Marocco '857 patent discloses only separating the cutting operations of the various blind components so as to enable manual cutting. In other words, in its various embodiments, the Marocco '857 patent only discloses cutting some of the blind components at the same time, and cutting other components at a different time, albeit, in some embodiments, all as part of a single movement stroke of a manual lever. For example, the Marocco '857 patent teaches such an arrangement through the use of gaps between the cutting blade and the components to be cut,

such as in the embodiment of FIGURES 17-26. As shown, the blade for cutting the bottom rail and the slot for the bottom rail include a substantial gap such that by the time the blade for cutting the bottom rail is cutting the bottom rail, the cutting of the head rail is already completed. Therefore, the components are cut progressively or sequentially. As another example, the Marocco '857 patent teaches the separation of cutting operations through the use of a lost motion linkage in FIGURES 8-10. In this embodiment, the head rail and bottom rail are cut first, and then the blind slats are cut.

Other embodiments shown in the Marocco '857 patent provide separate drive mechanisms for the head rail cutter and the blind slats cutter.

By contrast, the present claims specify that a single drive mechanism moves the cutters for the head rail, bottom rail and blind slats, and that the cutters cut their respective components at the same time in a non-sequential manner.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance and request same.

Respectfully submitted,

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